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LIT 327.R01: Shakespeare

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Fall 2020

Shakespeare

LIT 327

Tuesday, Thursday 11.00-12.20

Synchronous Remote Course

3 credits

Dr. Vanita, Professor of English

Office: Liberal Arts 146-A. Phone: 243-5793.

Mailbox: in LA129.

Office Hours: Tuesday 10.00-11.00; Thursday 1.00-2.00, and by appointment

Email: ruth.vanita@umontana.edu

This is a required course for the English major. It also fulfills the Gen Ed requirements for an upper division writing course and for a literature course.

Remote Teaching

This course is taught over Zoom at a specific time (TR 11.00-12.20). Here are the Zoom link and password for class meetings; I have also emailed these to you:

[Class Zoom Link](#)

Passcode 6246299

You need to log in to Zoom and be present for every class, with your video turned on and your mikes muted except when you want to speak. I need to be able to see you throughout the class time. You can physically be anywhere (on campus, in the library, at home) but you need to be on Zoom and visible to me during the class. We will have intervals during class for you to ask questions or make comments. You can either unmute your mike and speak or you can type into the Chat box.

Here are the Zoom link and password for my office hours; I have also emailed these to you:

1. Thursdays 1-2 p.m.

[Thursday office hours zoom link](#) Passcode: **158006**

2. Tuesdays 10.00-11.00 a.m.

[Tuesday office hours zoom link](#)

Passcode: **458848**

During office hours, I will be available on Zoom to talk live or to chat in the chat box.

Course Description and Goals

This course introduces you to the plays of Shakespeare who, by general consensus over time, is considered the greatest writer in the English language and one of the greatest dramatists in any language. We will

- survey the literary, political and social background for the literature, (especially drama) of the early modern (or Renaissance) period in England and in Europe more generally
- conduct a close reading of five plays
- consider a range of critical approaches to some major issues in these plays

- watch a classic cinematic version of *Hamlet*

Learning Outcomes

1. To become an experienced and insightful interpreter of Shakespeare—the plays, the films, the cultural phenomenon.
2. To become adept at constructing clear, imaginative, interesting readings of literary texts, in particular of Shakespeare’s plays.
3. To become proficient in writing persuasive essays that have a thesis, a coherent argument, and an articulate texture.

Required Texts

All the texts are Folger Shakespeare Library editions, general editors Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine.

1. *Much Ado about Nothing*. ISBN 978-0743482752
2. *Othello* ISBN 978-0743477550
3. *The Merchant of Venice* ISBN 978-0743477567
4. *King Lear* ISBN 978-0743482769
5. *The Winter’s Tale* ISBN 978-0743484893

Other Readings

These readings are not absolutely required but are recommended, especially for English majors. I am in the process of posting them on Moodle, but they should be read **only after** you finish reading the plays they discuss. I want you to have the unmediated experience of responding to the plays as the first spectators did and many even today do. Read the criticism only afterwards. The syllabus is structured accordingly. I have written short introductions to each essay so that you can pick the ones that interest you. Anyone who wants more readings on certain plays or aspects of or approaches to Shakespeare, please email me.

Requirements

Students are required to

- (a) attend classes on Zoom regularly. This is very important. Please inform me in advance by email if you are unable to attend a class. More than four absences not explained to my satisfaction will result in diminishing your grade for attendance and class participation, and eight or more absences will result in a zero for attendance; leaving early or coming late without explanation will be treated as an absence. If you turn off your video on Zoom and I cannot see your face, that will count as an absence.
- (b) Email me a thoughtful one-page **typed** response every Thursday before 2.00 p.m. This should be about the part of the text that we will discuss in class that day.
- (c) keep up with the assigned reading, bring the texts to class, and participate in class discussions.
- (d) complete all quizzes on time (see note on Quizzes below)
- (e) write three short papers. Topics and guidelines will be given in advance.
- (f) **Check UM email and Moodle regularly**, especially the day before class. I send out notifications and changes by email. UM policy forbids me to write to you at any email address other than the UM one. The best way to communicate with me is by email.

Quizzes

Quizzes on Moodle are of the multiple-choice/true-false type, and are designed to test whether you have read the plays carefully, and whether you remember important details regarding plot and character as well as information imparted in class. Quizzes open and close on fixed days and at fixed times, indicated in the Reading Schedule below and on Moodle. Please be sure to complete the quizzes during these times. Once you start a quiz you must complete it within the allotted 10-20 minutes (depending on the length of the quiz). You have only one chance to complete it, so do not start until you are ready to finish.

Required Extra Supplement

Because the fall semester this year is shorter than usual, we are required to add 3.5 hours of work. Please watch Laurence Olivier’s *Hamlet* (1948) and write a two-page response to it (this will be instead of the weekly one-page response for that week). The film DVD will be on 24-hour unrestricted reserve for our class at the Mansfield Library. Since Mansfield Library quarantines any items that are checked out, you should check it out well ahead of the deadline, and it would be advisable for small groups to watch it together in the library or at someone’s house. The film is also on Youtube but with rather obtrusive Spanish subtitles. You can rent the film on Amazon for \$3.99.

Widely considered the best *Hamlet* movie, this was the first British film to win the Academy Award for Best Picture; it also won the Golden Lion at the Venice film festival. Olivier is the only actor to have won an Oscar for Best Actor playing a Shakespearean role (in this film). This was the first sound film of *Hamlet* in the English language (the first-ever sound film of *Hamlet* was made in India in 1935, a Hindi translation directed by Sohrab Modi. Its subtitle was *Khooon ka Khooon*, meaning Blood for Blood).

Grades

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Class attendance	20%
Typed responses	15%
Response to the film	5%
Quizzes	15%
Three short papers	15% each

Other Matters

- a. **Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind, in any assignment, will result in your failing the class and may also result in other penalties such as expulsion from the University (for further details, refer to the section on Academic Misconduct in the Student Conduct Code).**
- b. If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to complete the work as I have outlined it, please notify me in the first week of class. Please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 (406.243.2243).

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes. Readings listed for a particular day are to be read before coming to class on that day, e.g. come to class on 27 August, having read *Much Ado* Acts I-II

Date	Assignment (to be completed on your own time, before class)	Class Plan	Assignments due
20 August	Read the syllabus carefully	Q&A on syllabus; background.	
25 August	Read background material from <i>Much Ado</i> , pp. xiii-l.	Background continues	
27 August	Read <i>Much Ado</i> , Acts I-II	Focus: features of comedy; types of love; marriage and money; sight and seeing; appearance and reality/disguise	Quiz on background on Moodle, opens 26 Aug, 8 p.m., closes 27 Aug, 10.30 a.m.
1 September	Read <i>Much Ado</i> , Acts III & IV	Focus; conspiracies; women's resistance; the jealous husband motif	
3 September	Read <i>Much Ado</i> , Act V	Focus: Comic resolution Background for problem plays	Quiz on <i>Much Ado</i> on Moodle, opens 2 Sep, 8 p.m., closes 3 Sep 10.30 a.m.
8 September	Read <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Acts I and II	Focus on Jews and Christians	
10 September	Read <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Act III	Focus on the love triangle; money and marriage	
15 September	Read <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Act IV	Focus on law, bonds, courtroom scenes	Quiz on Merchant, Acts I-III, opens 14 Sep, 8 p.m., closes 15 Sep, 10.30 a.m.
17 September	Read <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Act V	Focus on endings, mixed genres, staging choices.	Readings open on Moodle today at 2.00
22 September	Read Shapiro, Sinfield and O'Rourke essays	Q&A on readings. Background for Tragedy	Quiz on <i>Merchant</i> ,

Date	Assignment (to be completed on your own time, before class)	Class Plan	Assignments due
			Acts IV-V, opens 21 Sep, 8 p.m., closes 22 Sep 10.30 a.m
24 September	Read <i>Othello</i> Act I	Focus on blackness; outsiders	Paper due today, 8 p.m.
29 September	Read <i>Othello</i> Act II	Focus on the power of Shakespeare's language and how it works. Poetry; dramatic language; soliloquy	
1 October	Read <i>Othello</i> Act III	Focus on Iago and "motiveless malignity"	Quiz on <i>Othello</i>, Acts I-III, opens 30 Sep, 8 p.m., closes 1 Oct, 10.30 a.m
6 October	Read <i>Othello</i> Act IV	Gender and power; jealous husbands	
8 October	Read <i>Othello</i> Act V Read Orkin, Boose, Vanita (after finishing the play). Readings open on Moodle on the 6 th at 1.00	Focus: the role of objects; "Minor" characters	Quiz on <i>Othello</i>, Acts IV-V, opens 7 Oct, 8 p.m., closes 8 Oct 10.30 a.m
13 October	Read <i>King Lear</i> Act I	Focus: politics, power, property, family	
15 October	Read <i>King Lear</i> Act II	Focus: Madness and folly; the power of language	
20 October	Read <i>King Lear</i> Act III	Focus: Poverty; cruelty	Quiz on <i>Lear</i>, Acts I-III, opens 19 Oct, 8 p.m, closes 20 Oct 10.30 a.m
22 October	Read <i>King Lear</i> Act IV	Focus: self-knowledge and recognition; animal imagery	
27 October	Read <i>King Lear</i> Act V Readings open on Moodle today at 1.00	The sense of an ending; reader response	Quiz on <i>Lear</i>, Acts IV-V, opens 26 Oct, 8 p.m, closes

Date	Assignment (to be completed on your own time, before class)	Class Plan	Assignments due
			27 Oct 10.30 a.m
29 October	Read Bradley, Wilson Knight, Carroll, Kott	Discuss readings and film. Background for the last plays	
2 November			Response to <i>Hamlet</i> film due (on email) by 11 a.m
3 November	No class. Election day		
5 November	Read <i>The Winter's Tale</i> Act I	Focus: jealous husbands; male-male bonding; international politics; hosts and guests	Paper due today, 8 p.m
10 November	Read <i>The Winter's Tale</i> Act II	Focus: Female bonding; parents and children; Christian and Greco-Roman religious imagery	
12 November	Read <i>The Winter's Tale</i> Act III	Focus: Trials and courtrooms; women's resistance; folk and fairy tale motifs	Quiz on <i>Winter's Tale</i>, Acts I-III, opens 11 Nov, 8 p.m, closes 12 Nov 10.30 a.m
17 November	Read <i>The Winter's Tale</i> Act IV	Focus: Plot and ideas of time; Chorus and choric characters; nature and art. Discuss the paper	
20 November 10.10-12.10	Read <i>The Winter's Tale</i> Act V Read Wilson Knight, Neely after finishing the play. Readings open on Moodle 18 th at 8 a.m.	Since we have no final exam, this is a normal class period. Focus: Experiments in dramaturgy; endings. Discuss the paper	Quiz on <i>Winter's Tale</i>, Acts IV-V, opens 19 Nov, 8 p.m, closes 20 Nov 10.30 a.m
22 November			Paper due on email by 11.00 a.m